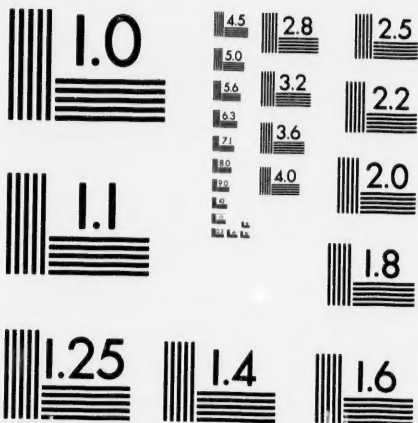




Pam
XG
C832

ANNEX 1
STACK

(Meth - Eng)



COUNSELS

TO

YOUNG CHRISTIANS

BY "A BUSINESS MAN."

TORONTO:

WILLIAM BRIGGS.

MONTREAL: C. W. COATES.

HALIFAX: S. F. HUESTIS.





COUNSELS
TO
YOUNG CHRISTIANS

BY "A BUSINESS MAN."

TORONTO:
WILLIAM BRIGGS

MONTREAL : C. W. COATES,

HALIFAX : S. F. HUESTIS.

Pam
XG

C832

ANNEX
STACK

INDEX.

	PAGE
ON TRUE REPENTANCE - - - -	4
" SAVING FAITH - - - -	5-6
" LOOKING UNTO JESUS - - - -	7
" CORRECT THOUGHTS OF GOD - - - -	8-9
" PRAYER - - - -	10-13
" WORKING FOR GOD - - - -	14-16
" CONFESSING CHRIST - - - -	17-18
" BIBLE READING - - - -	19-20
" FAITHFULNESS v. HAPPINESS - - - -	21
" QUESTIONABLE THINGS - - - -	22
" DUTY BEFORE PLEASURE - - - -	23
" TOTAL ABSTINENCE - - - -	24
" IMPROVING TIME - - - -	25-26
" THANKFULNESS - - - -	26-27
" STEWARDSHIP - - - -	28-29
" TAKING OFFENCE - - - -	29
" COMPANIONSHIPS - - - -	30-32

OCT 17 1951

COUNSELS
TO
YOUNG CHRISTIANS

INTRODUCTORY.

THE writer, in the following "counsels," written in moments snatched from a very busy life, has endeavoured to give the reader the benefit of a somewhat lengthened experience in dealing with young believers.

He does not claim for this production any literary merit ; but he feels certain that if such hints had been placed in his hands when he first began his Christian course, he might have been saved from some mistakes and consequent regrets.

ON TRUE REPENTANCE.

(1) TRUE REPENTANCE.—Whilst true repentance must necessarily be accompanied by godly sorrow, it is a mistake to suppose that a violent display of grief is an essential element in it. If you ask, "What is true repentance?" we unhesitatingly reply, "Such sorrow for sin as will lead you to mourn for it, to utterly forsake and renounce it, and to turn from it to God. REPENTANCE MUST INCLUDE THE SUBMISSION AND SURRENDER OF YOUR WILL TO GOD, and as a consequence the acceptance of GOD'S WILL as the rule of your life." If, then, you feel assured that you have thus made a surrender of yourself to God, and have absolutely turned *from* all sin *to* God, do not allow Satan to trouble you with the temptation, "You have not repented enough."

HAVE I TRUE FAITH?

(2) SAVING FAITH is a twofold act. First, *belief (of the mind)* in God's declarations about Christ. Second, *trust (of the heart)* in Christ as a *personal Saviour*. If you believe the record of God's Word, "that Jesus Christ by the grace of God hath tasted death" for you, and therefore that God has transferred the penalty of your sins to your *great Substitute*; and if you are at this moment, therefore, *trusting* Jesus as your personal Saviour, you have saving faith. Your faith may be very *weak*, but if it is faith in the right *Person—Jesus*—it is *saving faith* notwithstanding. The main point is not *how* or *how much* we trust, but *whom* we trust. The *safest* thing in the world for any poor sinner to do is to *trust Jesus with his soul*.

He may make all kinds of mistakes in other matters, but he cannot make a mistake in trusting Jesus Christ with the interests of his soul. Satan often tries to persuade young Christians that this is *presumption* on their part. But surely it cannot be presumption to act in obedience to God's warrant and command—"This is HIS COMMANDMENT, that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John iii. 23.)

Our comfort and strength depend upon the habitual *repetition* of our first act of simple trust in Christ. Salvation is always in the *present tense*. "I am TRUSTING THEE, Lord Jesus; trusting only Thee," "I live a MOMENT AT A TIME," "Jesus save me *now*."

The time can never come when you can dispense with this constant and simple faith in Jesus. Christians of fifty years' standing have laid up no "stock of grace," but need to go day by day, the same as young Christians, to draw *fresh* supplies from Christ, even as the Israelites had to gather the manna *fresh* every morning.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

(3) Get your mind *occupied with Christ*, and not with your own *feelings*, or even with your *faith*. The following incident may help you to see this point more clearly: Pastor Monod, of Paris, went into an inquiry-room in London, in which were two Christian workers directing two in-

quirers ; each Christian worker asked the inquirer whom he was directing precisely the same question, but with a different *emphasis*. The one said, "Cannot you *trust* Jesus?" directing the mind's eye of the inquirer to his own *faith*. "No, I cannot," was the answer. The other asked, "Cannot you trust *Jesus*?" directing the mind's eye of the inquirer to the *Object* of his faith. "Of course," was the answer, "I can trust JESUS!"

CULTIVATE CORRECT THOUGHTS
OF GOD.

(4) Remember that God is your FATHER, AND IS MORE GENTLE AND FORBEARING THAN THE BEST EARTHLY FATHER. He makes allowance for your weakness and ignorance

(Psalm ciii. 13), and frequently takes the will for the deed. Remember also that He takes as loving an interest in your feeble endeavours to serve Him as the kindest of earthly fathers takes in the *first feeble attempts of his little child to walk*—watching over and sympathizing with his little one, preventing it from falling, and picking it up again and again, but *never upbraiding it*. “Kind thoughts of God lie at the root of growth in grace.”

The devil always tries to drive people to extremes. If he cannot get their consciences seared, and thus make them careless and indifferent about minor points, he will endeavour to give them LEGAL THOUGHTS of God, and persuade them that they will lose their sonship the first time they neglect

their duty, or fall into some error or fault through unwatchfulness. He thus tries to make their consciences unhealthily *sensitive*, or so scrupulous and self-upbraiding as to lead them to cast away their confidence which "hath great recompense of reward." Preserve a healthy conscience, therefore, by constantly realizing the fact that God is your loving Father.

STATED TIMES FOR PRAYER.

(5) Backsliding always commences with neglect of private prayer. Ten or fifteen minutes given *in the morning* to prayer and reading of the Scriptures will make a wonderful difference to a Christian's inward calm and strength all the day. And as the *mid-day* meal is the most nourishing

to the body, so is a few minutes' prayer at mid-day a means of nourishing our spiritual strength ; and this everyone can secure who wishes it.

It is said to have been a rule with one of the great evangelists of the last century never to be more than three hours at a time away from his "inner chamber." A sainted acquaintance of the writer, at the close of his business day, always retired *first* to his own room, to give thanks for the blessings of the day, and to ask for grace to spend the evening hours profitably. Both these practices are worthy of our imitation.

WANDERING THOUGHTS IN PRAYER.

(6) Wandering thoughts are not in themselves necessarily sinful ; indeed, such is the

constitution of the mind that, to a *certain extent*, wandering thoughts are unavoidable. They become sinful only when no effort is made to discipline and overcome them.

There are several methods of checking and counteracting wandering thoughts in private prayer. (i.) To read the Bible on our knees, making it, verse by verse, the *medium* of prayer. (ii.) To take the Lord's Prayer in separate petitions, and let each *petition* be the central *thought* which shall *suggest* other petitions. (iii.) To have a written list of *topics* for prayer and praise. The topics for prayer should include the names of those persons for whose salvation you feel most anxious. Each of the above methods has been tried successfully as an antidote to wandering thoughts in prayer.

CULTIVATING THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

(7) “When a Christian *ceases to live in the spirit of prayer*, he ceases to be useful.” The vitality of the branch depends upon the *continuous* supply of sap *from* the trunk, or, in other words, upon its continuous and *living* connection *with* the trunk. “I am the vine ; ye are the branches ;” and it is by believing, fervent *prayer* that our connection *as branches* is vitally maintained with Christ as the vine.

“When I arose this morning,” said a young Christian, “and was washing myself, I asked God to wash my soul ; when I was putting my clothes on, I asked that God would clothe me with the righteousness of Christ ; when getting breakfast, that He would feed my soul ; when I was writing at

the office, that He would write my name in the book of life ; and, when my master sent me out with a message, I asked God to give me messages for sinners."

This is an illustration of the simple methods by which we may turn the common events of life into suggestions for prayer.

WORKING FOR GOD.

(8) Amongst professing Christians who do nothing for their Master there are numbers of *doubting, fearing and complaining Christians*, but *no rejoicing Christians* ! Working for God is as essential to spiritual health as exercise is to *physical* health.

The great deceiver of souls tells young Christians not to work until they get more strength. There is no more sense in this than there was in the report once given of a

young man whose trial sermon his critic had been hearing : "He should not preach any more until he has had some more practice."

The duty of working for God on behalf of others has been well illustrated by the miracle of Jesus in feeding the five thousand. The Saviour ordered the multitude to be seated in twelve companies of about four hundred and sixteen each, and then, dividing the five loaves into twelve pieces, He gave each disciple less than half a loaf, with the instruction, "Go and distribute this amongst that company." Any of the disciples might have replied, "Lord, there is scarcely enough for *myself* here ;" but, in obedience to their Lord's command, they commenced to give it away, the result being that each returned to his Lord with a *whole basketful* instead of *half a loaf*.

If you want a heart full of grace, commence to distribute that which you possess to those who are about you.

In working for God, subordinate the idea of *duty*, and say "Not *the burden* of the Lord, but the *pleasure* of the Lord." A friend once told the writer that whenever he had a hard and self-denying work to do for the Master, he kept repeating to himself: "*This is a PRIVILEGE! This is a PRIVILEGE!*"

Ought a healthy, working Christian to feel comfortable in his pew on a Sabbath night if he has not made SOME effort to bring an unsaved person under the sound of the Gospel?

The most earnest and successful Christian we ever knew generally spent half an hour after the Sunday morning service in making one or two visits to persons upon whom he

could exert some powerful influence. Whenever practicable, he offered a short prayer with them in their homes, and arranged to call and take them to divine service at night. This way of spending half an hour after the morning service will be found to be more profitable than that of indulging in vague, general or worldly conversation.

You belong to the Church *militant*, and to you therefore the Church should be a *camp* from which you, as a Christian *soldier*, shall issue to the fight; *not a hospital*, to which you shall be constantly retiring as a *patient*.

CONFESSING CHRIST.

(9) This is one of the *dual* conditions of salvation referred to by St. Paul. (See Romans x. 9, 10.) We were not ashamed, at one time, of avowing ourselves on the

side of the Evil One. Shall we be ashamed of letting people see and know that we are on the Lord's side? If we are ashamed of Christ in this world, He will be ashamed of us when He comes to judge mankind. (Luke ix. 26.)

A devoted Christian young man was dying, and just before he lost his speech he motioned to his father that he had something to say to him. The father put his ear close to his dying son's lips, and the words were whispered, "Stand up for Jesus!" What a grand motto for all Christians! A Christian cannot be happy while under the snare of the fear of man. That snare must be broken. Confess Christ in the spirit of prayer, and He will stand by and help you. There is a blessing attached to *confessing Christ*, as surely as there is a blessing

attached to believing in Christ. We were once asked by a farmer, "Cannot a man have salvation without confessing it?" Our answer was "He may possibly *have* it, but he will not *enjoy* it except by confessing it."

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE.

(10) To be strong and robust Christians we must live daily on CHRIST and the BIBLE. No one can live long on *meetings* only, however good they may be.

Always read the Bible in the spirit of prayer. A minister of some celebrity has the word "En-hakkore" on the title-page of his Bible. The explanation of the word is as follows: When Samson had destroyed a thousand of the Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass, we read that he was in danger of dying of thirst, but God, in answer

to *his cry*, "clave a hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived; wherefore he called the name thereof 'En-hakkore;'" that is, *the well of him that cried or prayed*; and similarly, the *Bible* becomes a well of living waters to *him that prays*.

READ IN A SEARCHING SPIRIT, AND NOT SIMPLY TO GET THROUGH YOUR DAILY CHAPTER; READ TILL YOU COME TO A VERSE THAT TOUCHES A CORD IN YOUR HEART; then write it out and refer to it during the day. Remember that, as when we pray we speak to God, so, when we read the Bible, He speaks to us. Go to the Bible, therefore, realizing that it is the Word of God, and that, through it, *God speaks to you*. You can procure any book of the New Testament in a cover for

a penny ; and you will find it convenient and profitable to carry one in your pocket for use in moments of leisure.

AIM AT FAITHFULNESS RATHER THAN
HAPPINESS.

(11) Determine to be faithful to Christ and useful to man, but do not be anxious to feel *happy*. That would be a selfish kind of religion. "I have never once prayed to be happy for twenty years," said a grand old Christian at a public meeting ; "but I have often prayed to be useful." "Feelings" are as unreliable and as changeable as the wind ; a dull, heavy day, some business or family perplexity, or a thousand other external circumstances beyond our control, may vary our *feelings* ; but our *faithfulness* to our Master should remain throughout all.

QUESTIONABLE THINGS.

(12) The Holy Spirit is easily grieved, and He is jealous of sin in the heart. He withdraws when sin enters. Grace soon disappears through the *leakage* caused by tampering with things questionable.

There are various tests by which we may ascertain whether things questionable are right or wrong. One is, "Can I ask God's *blessing* on this?" another is, "Can I ask Christ's *presence* with me in this?" and a third is, "What would Jesus do if He were in my place?" If young Christians would at the outset resolve that for life they would wage *war to the knife with sin*, and that they would be thorough-going, whole-hearted Christians, they would not often have to ask these questions.

We advise all young Christians to adopt the resolution expressed by a Scotchman who was converted in India, "I'll tak' a' the grace the Lord will gie me."

DUTY BEFORE PLEASURE.

(13) Several times every day there will be a conflict between the "natural man" and your sense of duty to God; but if you will make the above motto one of the rules of your life, you will be saved many a spiritual conflict, and, it may be, many a fall. Arrive at fixed ideas as to what *your* duty is; as, for instance, "How often should I attend the house of God on the Lord's Day?" "What *meetings* for fellowship and prayer should I attend every week?" "What care should I show for souls after the evening

sermon on the Lord's Day?" etc. Having once fixed in your mind what is your *duty*, *never swerve from it!* Do not be a *weather-cock* Christian. REMEMBER THAT OUR MASTER ESTIMATES OUR SERVICES BY WHAT THEY COST US IN EFFORT AND SELF-DENIAL.

TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

(14) The use of intoxicating drinks in this country is a source of so much sin and misery that it is the *bounden* duty of every Christian to determine his relation to them. Is there a large family in England without some victim to drink amongst its members? Do not more Church members make shipwreck of their faith through intoxicating drink than from any other cause? May not the taste for drink seize you, or ONE OF YOUR NEAREST AND DEAREST FRIENDS, at any time?

And, is it not better for you and for them to avoid all danger? Do not say, "If I set a good example as a *moderate* drinker, is not that sufficient?" But rather, "Should not I, by being a total abstainer, set such an example as *may prevent others contracting* a taste which may ruin them?" Is any example a good one which cannot be *safely followed*.

IMPROVEMENT OF TIME.

(15) Lazy men tempt the devil to tempt them, and he always responds with alacrity to the invitation by finding "mischief still for idle hands to do." It is a good thing to be so busily engaged as to have no time to attend to temptations.

It is mentally and physically invigorating to achieve any worthy result by dint of steady application, and it is equally true

that indolence is invariably enervating and destructive to moral character.

“An idler is a watch that wants both hands,
As useful if it goes as if it stands.”

TRY EARLY AND TRY HARD TO ACQUIRE A TASTE FOR READING. This once acquired, you may at any time be in good company, and hold communion with the greatest and truest men the world has ever produced. Read the biographies of men and women whose examples you think to be the most worthy of imitation.

A THANKFUL SPIRIT.

(16) King David's resolution on this subject was, “*Seven times a day will I praise Thee.*” We read that he also resolved to pray *three times a day*. This is *seven-tenths* of praise and *three-tenths* of prayer! The

writer will never forget a remark made by the late Rev. Thomas Vasey to a young man whose first child had been recently born :
“ Brother T——, whenever you look at your wife, and whenever you look at your child, you should say, ‘ Bless the Lord.’ ” Should not this really apply to all our mercies ? A thankful Christian is generally a happy and unselfish one.

Don’t forget that it is our privilege and duty to help to “ fill the world with smiles.”
“ The surest safeguard to domestic concord is the habit of wearing a smiling face ! It will prove a panacea for every ill, an antidote to every sorrow. Who that has felt the luxury of thus conferring happiness, of chasing from the brow a shadow, and from the heart a grief, would grudge the effort for so rich a boon ? ”

STEWARDSHIP.

(17) Be faithful as a *steward*. Many Christians take the COMFORT of being SONS who don't seem to like to feel the RESPONSIBILITY of being STEWARDS. A beggar once asked a Christian gentleman for alms. The gentleman gave him a shilling, with the remark, "There, take that ; it is more than ever the Lord gave me." "Sir," replied the beggar, "I thought you admitted that all came from Him." "Yes," replied the gentleman ; "but all that I have got is only LENT."

Some Christians seem to have erected a "scientific frontier" in their hearts, INSIDE which all belongs to the Lord ; *viz.*, their feelings, sentiment, etc. ; but they manage to put their money OUTSIDE THE FRONTIER,

so as to have the disposal of it in their own hands.

All men have in their hearts the principle of *covetousness*. It is as much a part of original sin as pride is. Giving is the natural antidote to covetousness, and the HEART TO GIVE can only be acquired and retained by GIVING. The greatest curse of covetousness is the LOSS OF THE HEART TO GIVE. Give SYSTEMATICALLY, however small your income is; commence at once, and endeavour to give a tenth *at least*. God blesses and prospers those who are faithful to Him in this respect.

TAKING OFFENCE.

(18) Remember that it takes *two* to make a quarrel. Resolve never to be one of them. Remember that when two Christians quarrel, at least two Christians are made miserable,

and bring their Christianity into disrepute, the Holy Spirit is grieved, the Church and the world both suffer, and the devil alone is the gainer by the transaction. He, therefore, who makes one in a quarrel is playing into the enemy's hands, and hindering the work of God.

It has been a rule for many years with the writer never to take offence with two classes of people : (1) With those who DON'T INTEND to give offence ; for on the face of it, it is unjust to take offence where it is not intended ; (2) With those who DO INTEND to give offence. We should pity and pray for such persons, and not quarrel with them.

COMPANIONSHIPS.

(19) One of the most fruitful causes of backsliding in young Christians is the habit

of making companions of unconverted persons. This is especially the case when such friendships ripen into marriage. The forming of such companionships is opposed alike to Bible teaching, to Christian instinct, and to common sense. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." (2 Cor. vi. 14.) You would not think of marrying into the family of your father's bitterest enemy! And all unconverted people are the enemies of Christ. Besides, the ONE GREAT OBJECT IN LIFE of the Christian is (or should be) to please God. It is therefore the height of folly to make a bosom companion of one who *cannot sympathize* with you in this object, who is certain to look somewhat *coldly* upon it, and who will most likely, in the end, *sneer* at it. It is a very plausible device of Satan that by such alliances the cause of God may

32 *Counsels to Young Christians.*

in the end be promoted, and that you will be likely to bring your unconverted friend to religious decision AFTER marriage. The testimony of the writer and of many of his friends is, that in the great majority of cases the result has been EXACTLY THE REVERSE. (An old lady put a canary out to teach the sparrows to *sing* ; the sparrows taught it to CHIRP !) Christians should form only such close friendships *as will stretch farther into the other world.*



BOOKS AND TRACTS

ON THE

CLASS-MEETING.

The Class-meeting : Its Value to the Church. Three Prize Essays, in one volume.....	\$0 35
Thoughts Spoken in Class. A Class-leader's Note- book. By R. Jessop.....	0 50
A Manual of Instruction and Advice for Class- leaders. By Rev. J. S. Simon.....	0 70
The Class-meeting : Its Scriptural Authority and Practical Value. By Rev. J. A. Chapman, M.A.	0 10
Our Class-meetings: Their Origin and Organiza- tion.....	0 05
Advice to One Who Meets in Class. By Robert Newstead	0 03
Objections to the Methodist Class-meeting An- swered. By John Bate. Limp cloth	0 35
Proceedings of the Class-leaders' Convention held in Toronto in 1891.....	0 10
The Class-leader's Treasury. By John Bate... ..	2 60

POSTPAID AT LIST PRICES.

TORONTO:

WILLIAM BRIGGS,

WESLEY BUILDINGS.

C. W. COATES, Montreal.

S. F. HUESTIS, Halifax.